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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, June 20

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
June 21, 2009

08:32 Took a walk around his official residence.

12:57 Visited the campaign office of a Tokyo assembly election candidate in Hakusan.

13:25 Visited the campaign office of a Tokyo assembly election candidate in Oji-honcho.

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14:34 Visited the campaign office of a Tokyo assembly election candidate in Higashi-kurume.

15:16 Visited the campaign office of a Tokyo assembly election candidate in Higashi-murayama.

16:00 Visited the campaign office of a Tokyo assembly election candidate in Kodaira.

16:38 Visited the campaign office of a Tokyo assembly election candidate in Koganei.

17:03 Visited the campaign office of a Tokyo assembly election candidate in Fuchu.

18:29 Visited the campaign office of a Tokyo assembly election candidate in Machida.

19:45 Visited a tailor in Kita-aoyama.

20:06 Returned to his official residence.

Prime Minister's schedule, June 21

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
June 22, 2009

Morning Spent time at his official residence.

13:39 Filed away documents at the Hotel Okura.

16:24 Visited the Yaesu Book Center in Yaesu.

17:02 Visited the Bic Camera Yurakucho Store.

17:37 Returned to his official residence.

19:15 Dined at a sushi restaurant in Mishuku with his wife, Chikako.

21:05 Returned to his official residence.

4) Soya, 4 other key straits have narrower territorial waters to allow passage of U.S. ships carrying nuclear weapons; Government avoided violating 3 non-nuclear principles

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Abridged)
June 22, 2009

It was learned on June 21 that the government had limited the territorial sea to only 3 nautical miles (approximately 5.6 kilometers) at Soya, Tsugaru, and three other important straits instead of the legally allowed 12 nautical miles (approximately 22 kilometers) in order to avoid making nuclear arms carried on U.S. military vessels a political issue. Behind this government decision is the secret agreement exchanged at the time of the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in 1960. Several former parliamentary vice ministers of foreign affairs have revealed the above to Kyodo News.

U.S. strategic nuclear submarines responsible for nuclear deterrence operations in the Sea of Japan facing the Soviet Union (now Russia), China, and North Korea need to pass through these straits. If the territorial sea were 12 nautical miles, some of the straits would have no open sea, which means nuclear weapons would pass through Japanese territorial waters.

The government, fearing violation of Japan's "three non-nuclear principles," which ban the introduction of nuclear arms into

Japanese territory, therefore intentionally left some open sea, giving priority to the passage of nuclear weapons. This has resulted in narrower territorial waters in the straits up to this day. The official reason given is "to promote free navigation in these important straits," but the government is now likely to be asked to explain.

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According to a former vice minister, during the legislation process for the Territorial Sea Law in 1977, which designates the width of the territorial sea to be 12 nautical miles, the handling of the straits of Soya, Tsugaru, Osumi, and the eastern and western channels of Tsushima Straits was discussed. It was reckoned that in light of the secret agreement exchanged during the revision of the Security Treaty in 1960, which acquiesced in U.S. nuclear vessels' passage through Japanese waters, even if the territorial sea were changed to 12 nautical miles, the U.S. government would carry nuclear weapons on its military vessels anyway.

Therefore, it was suggested that 3-nautical mile territorial waters be retained to leave portions of the open sea in the straits. Ships carrying nuclear weapons would pass through the open sea portion in the five straits, so this would allow the Japanese government to answer in the Diet that "they are outside Japanese territorial waters, so we have nothing to do with them." (Kyodo)

5) Showdown intensifying between U.S. government, Congress over issue of F-22 fighter jets

NIKKEI (Page 6) (Full)
June 20, 2009

(Yukiko Deshimaru, Washington)

Antagonism is intensifying between the Department of Defense and Congress over the issue of whether the U.S. should end the production of the F-22 advanced stealth fighter. The Senate approved on June 18 a supplementary budget including funds to extend the production of the F-22. In reaction, Defense Secretary Robert Gates expressed strong displeasure at a press conference on June 18, remarking: "Frankly speaking, the decision is totally meaningless." The Japanese government has put the F-22 high on the list of planes under consideration for its next generation fighter (FX).

The F-22 is a highly priced aircraft, with one unit costing 300 million dollars, or approximately 29 billion yen (including development expenses). Despite its cutting-edge stealth technology to evade radar detection, the aircraft has yet to be used in actual warfare, because no large-scale air battle has taken place in recent military strategies, such as Afghanistan. In light of cost, Gates decided to end orders for the F-22 fighter jet in April.

U.S. Congress members eager to maintain jobs in their electoral districts involved in the production of the F-22 fiercely reacted to the DOD decision. House legislators and Senators agreed to amend the supplementary budget bill for fiscal 2009 (covering from October 2008 through September 2009) to include funds for continued procurement and production of the F-22. The House of Representatives and the Senate approved the extra funding on June 16 and 18, respectively. Gates said angrily in the press conference: "The decision runs counter to the budget policy announced by the president."

6) U.S. House committee adopts provision seeking "study on export to Japan" of F-22 fighter

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)
June 21, 2009

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The U.S. House Armed Services Committee has included a provision seeking "study on the possibility of export to Japan" of the F-22

advanced stealth fighter in a defense budget authority bill for fiscal 2010 (October 2009 - September 2010). Japan has been eager to purchase the F-22 as its next-generation fighter (FX). Under U.S. domestic law, the export of the F-22 is banned. But the amendment provision urges the government to look into exporting the product only to Japan.

The amendment provision, submitted by House of Representatives member Joe Courtney (Democrat) from Connecticut, was approved by the committee. The defense secretary is required to report on five items, including the price of the export version and necessary legal amendments, to Congress within 30 days after the said bill is enacted into law. Approval in a plenary session and signature by the president are necessary to enact the bill.

In the U.S. Congress, an increasing number of members have been calling for continued production of the F-22, in view of job security in their electoral districts. As part of these moves, some members have favored approving exports of the product to U.S. allies. The supplementary budget for fiscal 2009 (October 2008 - September 2009) adopted by the Senate and the House of Representatives separately as of June 18 also included a clause approving funds for research and development of the export version of the F-22.

Meanwhile, many U.S. government officials are cautious about exporting the F-22, focusing on its high confidentiality. The Defense Department's recent decision to end orders for the high-priced F-22 fighter jet is part of the Obama administration's economic policy of reducing the nation's fiscal deficit mainly by shrinking defense spending. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who is pursuing budgetary reform in response to the President's policy, is facing a challenge by Congress.

7) MSDF allowed to escort foreign ships

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged)
June 20, 2009

The Diet has now enacted an antipiracy law, which will substantially expand the scope of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's activities in waters off the eastern African coast of Somalia. A squadron of MSDF destroyers, currently deployed there, will now be allowed to escort foreign ships as well, in addition to Japanese ships and Japan-linked ships.

"Pirates are sea robbers, so to tell the truth, considering the security of Japan, I'm glad that the antipiracy law has been enacted," Prime Minister Aso told reporters yesterday at his office.

In waters off Somalia, two MSDF destroyers are currently tasked with conveying Japanese commercial ships and Japanese-related ships to shuttle on an eastward- and westward-bound route of about 900 kilometers in a danger zone. The MSDF has also sent two P-3C patrol planes for airborne warning and surveillance.

An increasing number of foreign ships are expected to ask the MSDF for escorting, so the Defense Ministry, with an eye on the law going into effect in late July, will study how to respond to their

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requests for escorting.

Meanwhile, the question is how long Japan will continue the Self-Defense Forces' deployment there. Accordingly, the Defense Ministry will also have to study an 'exit strategy.' For the time being, the Defense Ministry plans to continue the antipiracy mission while rotating the MSDF destroyers and P-3Cs every three or four months. The ministry anticipates that the antipiracy mission could be drawn out. With this possibility in mind, the ministry is also considering such measures as withdrawing the MSDF detachment for a certain period of time according to the local situation. In addition, the ministry is also considering reducing the number of MSDF destroyers out there in Somalia waters in cooperation with those working in the Indian Ocean on a refueling mission. However,

it would be difficult to call off the antipiracy mission completely. Aso, sitting in on June 18 before the House of Councillors Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, went no further than to state: "The antipiracy mission will end if we no longer see piracy there. I will make an overall judgment, taking into consideration the impact of piracy on Japan's economy and public life."

8) Antipiracy law remains equivocal about weapons use

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged)
June 20, 2009

The Diet has now enacted an antipiracy law, under which the Maritime Self-Defense Force's antipiracy mission in waters off Somalia will become a full-blown task with the expanded scope of authorization to use weapons. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, which is in charge of the nation's airline and travel industries, is concerned about the possibility of terrorism targeted at Japanese nationals if pirates are killed or wounded.

"The military is good at looking for an excuse for opening war," a former senior Japan Coast Guard official said. "But," he added, "they don't want to think about what to do after the war." In the past two years, Somali terrorist groups came under attack three times from U.S. forces. The antipiracy mission will get bogged down if they join hands with Islamic antigovernment insurgents for weapons and money and if they regard foreign forces as their common enemies.

The question is what to do if and when foreign forces attacked pirates at their base camp in conformity with a United Nations resolution. The government, in its Diet reply, took the position that Japan will be engaged in the task of cracking down on crimes, which does not fall under the use of armed force. Indeed, the antipiracy law defines antipiracy activities as policing activities. This logic, however, applies only in Japan.

In Somalian waters, when the MSDF repel pirate ships with its destroyers, they use local languages to identify themselves with loudspeakers as Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force or Japan's navy. Their activities appear to be military activities in the eyes of foreigners.

Under the antipiracy law, the mission is primarily for the JCG. However, the JCG has only one patrol ship that can be sent out. For this reason, the government sent two MSDF destroyers. A senior official of the land and transport ministry noted: "If the JCG takes

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the lead and is assisted by the MSDF as stipulated in the law, and if the local situation turns into jihad, then the JCG can withdraw with the MSDF since such a situation is off the scope of policing activities. The MSDF is currently acting without the JCG, so it would be difficult for the MSDF to pull out when considering its relations with foreign naval forces there." This official insisted that the government should review its easygoing deployment that lacks a withdrawal plan and should have a new patrol ship built for a rotational mission. "The JCG should take the lead," he said.

9) MSDF to send 8 destroyers overseas

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Abridged)
June 22, 2009

The Maritime Self-Defense Force has been tasked with overseas activities, such as escorting commercial ships in waters off Somalia against pirates and refueling foreign naval vessels in the Indian Ocean. In July, when the MSDF vessels currently out there will be rotated, a total of eight MSDF destroyers will be sent abroad as their backups, which means that the MSDF will send out half of its destroyers that can go operational in the event of an emergency at home. Some officials are worried about repercussions on national defense.

The shortfall of MSDF destroyers has already affected the MSDF.

Every June, the MSDF sends two destroyers for training exercises in the United States. This year, the MSDF cut back from two destroyers to one for the first time. MSDF destroyers at home are heavily burdened to back up those sent overseas.

The MSDF has sent out a total of five destroyers on overseas missions, broken down into two destroyers on the antipiracy mission and one each on the fueling, ocean-going, and U.S.-led training missions. In July, the MSDF destroyers on the antipiracy and refueling missions will be rotated. On that occasion, a total of eight MSDF destroyers will be off the neighborhood of Japan.

The MSDF has a total of 52 destroyers. They are in established rotation for repairs, training exercises, and missions. Accordingly, one third of these MSDF destroyers are on direct missions. They are indispensable for national defense but have been sent overseas.

Last December, the MSDF worked out a drastic reform plan that was intended to dissolve "too many tasks and manpower shortages." Soon after that, however, the MSDF's antipiracy mission started in Somalia waters. "There's no doubt that we've been tasked with more overseas missions," MSDF Chief of Staff Keiji Akahoshi said. We want to ready ourselves at home (for national defense)," the MSDF's top brass officer added.

10) List of sanctions against North Korea presented at UN

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Abridged slightly)
Evening, June 20, 2009

Akiko Sugimoto, New York

The Sanctions Committee against North Korea consisting of members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) on June 19 held its first meeting since the adoption of a resolution condemning North Korea's second nuclear test. Participating countries presented their own lists of

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organizations and individual names that are suspected to be involved in nuclear and missile developments by North Korea. Only three organizations were subjected to sanctions imposed by the sanctions committee after the April launch of a missile. However, it appears that the lists presented by Japan and the U.S. this time included more organizations and individuals, the aim being to contain nuclear-related activities by North Korea.

The meeting brought together experts from the 15 UNSC member nations. Each country brought a draft mentioning the names of organizations and individuals as candidates that could be subjected to sanctions. Japan and the U.S. appear to have proposed incorporating the names of individuals who were not incorporated in the final list of sanctions issued in April and including luxury goods in the list of prohibited imports.

Meanwhile, Russia and China will likely cautiously approach the imposition of tough sanctions on North Korea. The sanctions committee, in principle, is not allowed to include items in a sanctions list without the agreement of all 15 countries. It is obligated to end the work of specifying targets of sanctions within 30 days after the adoption of the resolution on the 12th.

11) LDP eager to use MSDF in North Korea ship inspections in view of close cooperation with U.S. military

SANKEI (Page 3) (Abridged slightly)
June 20, 2009

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) decided on June 20 to seek the presentation of a special measures bill allowing both the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) and the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) to play main roles in inspecting ships entering and leaving North Korea in both Japanese territorial waters and the high seas. Many countries are engaged in naval operations, as seen in the fact that the U.S. Navy is chasing a North Korean ship in waters near China. Given the situation, the LDP judged that in order to swiftly share information and work closely with the U.S. Navy, the MSDF must be used actively

from the beginning.

The government and the ruling parties plan to have their project team come up with the legislation's framework as early as June 25. The view is strong in the government and New Komeito that the JCG should play the main role in ship inspections. But a LDP executive commented, "The New Komeito has not decided not to use the SDF." The LDP plans to propose the use of the MSDF at a project team meeting on June 23.

If North Korea conducts another nuclear test, the UN Security Council might adopt a stronger resolution, for instance, impose a naval blockade. The prevailing view in the LDP is that Japan needs legislation that will allow the government to mobilize the MSDF that is capable of immediately responding to highly dangerous situations. For this reason, the LDP plans to seek the presentation of special measures legislation that specify both the JCG and MSDF as bodies to play main roles in carryout out inspections and to urge the government to establish a framework allowing it to make its own decision on the two.

New Komeito Representative Akihiro Ota at a press conference on June 19 expressed his understanding to suing the MSDF, saying, "The JCG will play the main role, but I wonder if that is sufficient in

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dealing with the situation." With many in the New Komeito holding cautious views, whether the party will accept the LDP's decision remains to be seen.

12) Government to submit to Diet a special measures bill to inspect North Korean cargo; Barriers high for inspections on high seas

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
June 22, 2009

The government and the ruling parties intend to submit a special measures bill to the current Diet session before the end of the month that will allow Japan to inspect cargo on North Korean ships. The legislation is designed to expand the scope of ship inspections that is currently limited to Japan's territorial waters. But in order to implement the envisaged legislation, three barriers need to be cleared.

The ruling parties' special measures law project team met last month. In the session, the government insisted that the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) should conduct cargo inspections on the high seas, while the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) called for the framework of the dispatch of the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF). The meeting failed to find a settlement line.

Questions about effectiveness of inspections

Geographical conditions are one of the reasons of cautiousness about conducting inspections on the high seas. In many cases, North Korean ships navigate through the Yellow Sea between China and the Korean Peninsula. Chances are slim for them to reach the Sea of Japan via the Tsushima Straits close to South Korea and Japanese territorial waters. The prevailing view in the Cabinet Office responsible for legislation is that it can hardly envisage situations where Japan will have to conduct cargo inspections on the high seas.

At one point, it was pointed out in the ruling coalition that there might be need for refueling of U.S. naval vessels. But according to a senior Defense Ministry official, there has been no request from the U.S. military for inspections of North Korean cargo or the provision of fuel to their vessels on the high seas.

The second question is the effectiveness of ship inspections. Under the latest UN Security Council resolution, a country conducting a cargo inspection on the high seas needs to obtain consent from the flag-state. But chances are slim that North Korea will agree to such an inspection. The flag-state that refuses to give consent will then be asked to make its ship enter a port. Again, the chances seem slim that North Korea would comply with such a request.

The U.S. Navy has been following the North Korean cargo ship Kang Nam since last week, suspecting it might be carrying nuclear and missile-related materials. But it has yet to inspect the cargo. "The purpose is to apply pressure," a senior MSDF official said.

North Korea might use ship inspections to carry out another provocative act

There is concern in the government that the North might use ship inspections as an excuse to carry out another provocative act, meaning that the North might add confrontation with Japan to its pool of bargaining chips.

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In the process of adopting the UN resolution, Japan and the United States strongly called for ship inspections on the high seas. The government and the ruling parties are in accord on the need for new legislation, but the two sides are divided over specifics.

13) Government to provide yen loans to four Asian countries to assist global warming countermeasures

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
June 22, 2009

The government decided yesterday to offer yen loans to Bangladesh, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand under its climate change program loan designed to support developing countries' efforts to combat global warming. The government will decide on specific amounts through coordination with these countries, but it eyes several tens of billions of yen for each nation.

This is an eye-catcher in the nation's assistance plan for developing countries' global warming countermeasures announced by Prime Minister Taro, besides the nation's midterm target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By offering loans, the government apparently is aiming to solicit support from more developing countries for its efforts to contain global warming prior to the Copenhagen Conference later this year to form a new international climate regime.

Under the program loan system, sector-specific targets will be set and loans will be provided to support measures worked out by developing countries. The government intends to disburse about 500 billion yen over the next five years.

14) 90 PERCENT of government-sponsored bills to clear Diet

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
June 22, 2009

There is a possibility that passage of government-sponsored bills submitted to the current Diet session will be at the 90 percent level, which is the same as that before the Diet's upper house fell into opposition hands. The reason is because deliberations have been accelerated by the respective motives of the ruling and opposition camps. The ruling parties want to chalk up achievements with an eye on the next House of Representatives election, while the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), aims to improve the environment for an early dissolution of the Lower House.

Of the 67 government-sponsored bills, 49 have cleared the Diet. On June 19, five bills, including the antipiracy bill, were approved, pushing up the percentage of the passage of bills to 73.1 percent.

Of the remaining 18 bills, 10, including a formal archives bill, have been sent to the House of Councillors. Three bills, including a bill to revitalize local shopping areas, are expected to clear the Lower House soon. The DPJ intends to approve these 13 bills, taking a cooperative position of passing them during the ongoing session. If the Lower House is not dissolved before mid-July, 92.5 percent of the government-sponsored bills will be enacted, topping the (91.8 percent) marked at the regular session in 2007 before the divided Diet. The government will submit to the Diet a bill on cargo inspections (on North Korean ships) as early as late June. Even if the bill is not passed, the percentage of the passage of bills will

be at the 90 percent level.

In the 2008 regular Diet session under the situation with the divided Diet, the percentage of the passage was 78.8 percent, dropping to a level lower than 80 percent for the first time in 18 years. The reasons for the large percentage increases in the passage of bills are because the government decreased by more than 10 bills the number submitted to the Diet, and because the ruling coalition flexibly responded to deliberations revising bills. Twenty bills were revised through deliberations between the ruling and opposition camps. In the regular session last year, 13 bills were revised through deliberations.

One ruling camp lawmaker pointed out: "The major reason is that the DPJ, with Lower House dissolution in mind, has not boycotted deliberations in the extended Diet session."

15) DPJ alarmed about possible tidal change in political situation as result of trial on Nishimatsu Construction president

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Abridged slightly)
June 20, 2009

The first trial on illegal political donations to the political support office of Ichiro Ozawa, now deputy president of the Democratic Party of Japan, made by Nishimatsu Construction Co. was held on June 19 at the Tokyo District Court. With the office's involvement in bid-rigging practices being pointed out in detail, many DPJ members now have a heightened sense of alarm that this could affect the next Lower House election.

A mid-ranking lawmaker, who distances himself from Ozawa said with his face darkening: "The points made at the trial appear to be different from Mr. Ozawa's explanations. He had said that the sources of donations will not be delved into. If it is proved that his explanations were false, the tide could turn in the run-up to the Lower House election."

Upper House Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Susumu Yanase told a press conference, "Mr. Ozawa stepped down as president. This is a very serious way of taking responsibility as politician. The validation of the evidence by a third party committee is already over. The trial will not have an impact as a whole."

Supreme advisor Kozo Watanabe also told reporters: "Voices hoping that the DPJ will take the reins of government are gaining ground. This issue will not change the trend at all."

Some lawmakers critical of Ozawa take the view that since the new leadership is going well, having a renewed internal power struggle should be avoided. A certain party executive, who has distanced himself from Ozawa, said on the 19th, "I will make no comment. That is for the sake of the party. The storm will recede, while we remain silent."

The Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the People's New Party (PNP) are showing a certain level of understanding to such a stance of the DPJ. However, they are concerned with SDP Secretary General Shigeno noting, "If what have been pointed out at the trial is true, it would be a serious problem," or PNP Secretary General Hisaoki Kamei saying, "One cannot say that the trial will have no political impact at all."

The ruling parties want to heighten interest in the incident, by strengthening an attack on the DPJ, and bring about a rollback.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General of the Upper House Tanigawa underscored during a press conference: "We must make Mr. Ozawa feel great responsibility." New Komeito Secretary General Kitagawa at the party's meeting of lawmakers pointed out: "Mr. Ozawa

should give a proper explanation. The DPJ's self-cleansing capability is being called into question.

16) 2009 Tokyo assembly election: LDP candidates distancing themselves from Aso

YOMIURI (Page 38) (Full)
June 22, 2009

Prior to the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election, the run-up to the next House of Representatives election, the Yomiuri Shimbun conducted a survey of candidates running in the race in the form of a questionnaire. One of the questions was who would be the most suitable politician for prime minister. Of the 58 candidates backed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), only 27 (47 percent) said Prime Minister Taro Aso, while 83 percent of the Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) candidates said DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama. The figures show that the LDP candidates for the Tokyo election also are distancing themselves from Aso although he has taken a stance of placing importance on the election by visiting the campaign offices of the candidates.

The survey was conducted on the 210 candidates from June 10, asking seven questions such as their campaign issues and the low cabinet support rates. As of June 21, 206 persons replied to the questionnaires.

Although all the 58 LDP candidates supported the Aso cabinet, less than 50 percent of them preferred Aso as prime minister, while 8 persons preferred Nobuteru Ishihara, LDP senior deputy secretary general.

Three candidates each said they think Kaoru Yosano, finance Minister, state minister for financial services, and state minister for economic and fiscal policy, and former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike, are the most suitable politicians for prime minister. Two candidates preferred Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara. Eleven candidates did not reply to the question.

Of the 53 DPJ candidates, 44 said Hatoyama, three each preferred Deputy President Naoto Kan and Secretary General Katsuya Okada, and one said House of Councillors member Renho. Four candidates did not mention any politician.

Also in the Yomiuri poll (conducted on June 13-14), in which the approval rate for the Aso cabinet was 22.9 percent, candidates expressed strong dissatisfaction with Aso. Of the 20 candidates, who mentioned the name of other politician than Aso as most suitable for prime minister, one Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly member said:

"It has now clarified that Prime Minister Aso lacks leadership due to the dismissal of Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Kunio Hatoyama. With this, the adverse wind has become stronger."

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A first-time candidate said: "The Prime Minister has often changed his decisions."

Another Tokyo assembly member, who wrote Prime Minister Aso as most suitable, said: "I wrote his name from a sense of duty as he came to my office to encourage me. So, I was unable to write the name of other politician."

A new candidate, who had wrote down the name of Nobuteru Ishihara, said: "He is young and fresh. I can leave the party's reform to him." A Tokyo assembly member, who wrote the name of Kaoru Yosano, said: "His fiscal policy is good. He has replied to questions at the Diet in a good manner."

17) Economy is declining... but people are happy: Poll by Cabinet Office finds increasing number of respondents concerned about old age

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June 20, 2009

The Cabinet Office on June 19 summed up the results of a survey of preferences in people's lives for fiscal 2008. The survey found that the prevailing public consciousness is that although their lives have become difficult in economic terms, following the economic recession they are fulfilled but have concerns about their old age. While nearly 90 PERCENT of respondents feel that their living standards have deteriorated, more than 50 PERCENT are satisfied with their lives as a whole. The survey highlighted the dignity of average persons who feel modestly happy, even when the economy is on the decline.

According to the poll, to a question whether they think their living standards are getting better, 10.3 PERCENT, down 50 PERCENT from the previous poll, replied that their lives have improved. The figure is the lowest-ever since the survey started in 1978. The downtrend that kicked in in 1990 during the economic bubble era has thus accelerated.

Respondents who feel that their lives are deteriorating reached 89.5 PERCENT, underscoring the present situation, in which the economic crunch is hitting the lives of the people.

In the meantime, to a question whether respondents are satisfied with their lives in general, 55.9 PERCENT said that they are satisfied, up 16.5 points from three years ago. Respondents who are married with children and those with single-family homes have contributed to pushing up the percentage, according to the Cabinet Office. A survey of fulfillment, which asked respondents what they are satisfied with, endorsed that. Among 60 kinds of fulfillment, the highest number of pollees cited that they have conversations between parents and children and that they trust one another.

The percentage of pollees who replied that have bright prospects for their lives in old age is gradually declining. The lowest-ever 11.8 PERCENT replied that their outlook for old age is bright, while 87.9 PERCENT replied otherwise, saying that they did not think so. Savings per household are dropping due to a drop in income in the wake of the recession, which appears to be fanning anxieties over future pension payouts.

The survey was conducted on persons aged between 15 and 75

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throughout the nation between January and February this year. Replies were received from about 4,500 men and women.

ZUMWALT